

127

Lynn Canal Conservation, Inc.  
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December 27, 2005

Statewide Planning Office  
Division of Program Development  
3132 Channel Drive, Suite 200  
Juneau Alaska 99801 – 7898

Re: STIP Comments

Lynn Canal Conservation is a Haines-based conservation organization. Our members support prioritizing state and federal transportation funding for improvements to the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) and repairs to existing roads and highways, rather than funding the Knik Arm Bridge, Gravina Bridge, and Juneau Road. We believe the proposed STIP changes are detrimental to the best interests of the state of Alaska.

In March of 2005 the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) stated that one third of Alaska's major roads are in poor to mediocre condition. ASCE cited Alaska DOT estimates that maintenance needs are underfunded by at least \$40 million each year. They also stated that 30% of existing bridges in Alaska are "structurally deficient or functionally obsolete."<sup>1</sup> Considering the extent of money that would be needed to fix existing roads and bridges, and considering the level of underfunded maintenance needs, it is foolish to build three controversial mega-projects that will eat up over half of the existing available transportation money and would also compete for inadequate maintenance funding once built.

Transportation money would be better spent on replacing the LeConte and a new mainline ferry. We request money be put back into the budget for these necessary AMHS vessels. The AMHS has well-served the communities of Southeast Alaska for forty years. Our unique geography requires marine transportation. Ninety per cent of public comment on the revised Southeast Transportation Plan favored making the AMHS the top transportation priority. With adequate funding, the AMHS can continue to be the safest, most reliable, most efficient, and least environmentally damaging way to move people and freight in all of Southeast, including the Upper Lynn Canal.

Locally we support prioritizing repairing and upgrading existing roads damaged in the recent rainstorms. We believe Lutak Road repairs should be fully funded and completed as scheduled in the previous STIP. Community-supported needs should be prioritized in the STIP, not the three proposed mega-projects.

It's absolutely foolhardy to consider wasting millions of dollars on a road from Juneau to the Katzechin. If built, this road would be more expensive to maintain and operate than the existing

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<sup>1</sup> [www.asce.org](http://www.asce.org)

Northern Lynn Canal ferry system. It would also be dangerous and less reliable. Recent rainstorms caused more than \$2 million damage to Haines' roads. Even bigger washouts can be expected to occur along the more extreme terrain of a Juneau Road because the amount of runoff from the steep Coast Mountains would far surpass recent Haines flooding. DOT should not continue to ignore the transportation needs and preferences of the communities. Haines and Skagway residents, as well as a majority of Juneau residents, do not support a Juneau Road. There is simply no polite way to say stop cramming this unwanted, unnecessary road down our collective throats.

Normally we would close our comments by thanking you for considering them, but Governor Murkowski's DOT doesn't seem to care what communities want.

Nancy Berland  
Issues Coordinator